



Nesting occurs from April to June with two to four blue-green eggs laid. Fall migration begins in August.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; bottomland forests; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

uncommon; native

Iowa Range

summer: scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats; migrant: poorly known

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

yellow-crowned night-heron

Nyctanassa violacea

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Aves
Order:	Ciconiformes
Family:	Ardeidae

Features

An adult yellow-crowned night-heron is 22 to 28 inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. It has a plump, gray body. The head is black with a patch of white on its cheek and white on the top of the head. Its wings and back are black and gray-speckled. The thick beak is black and the medium-sized legs are yellow. Like the other herons, its neck is held in an "S" formation during flight with its legs trailing straight out behind its body.

Natural History

The yellow-crowned night-heron is an uncommon migrant through Iowa. It winters from the southern United States south to Costa Rica and Panama. It lives in swamps, marshes, lakes, sloughs, and along streams. It eats crayfish, fish, frogs, and insects. Its call is "quark." This solitary bird is active during the day. Spring migrants begin arriving in Iowa in March. The nest usually is placed solitarily in a tree, but it may be in small groups with other heron species.